

HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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MY FIRST SUIT OF CLOTHES

By Alphonso Patterson

WHILE proudly strolling down the avenue in my hometown of New Orleans, wearing my first new suit of clothes, I came upon a group of white youths who threw rotten bananas on me. I became so angry that my eyes were hot with tears. I wanted to hate them with a deadly hate that would shrivel them up, but, because of the lessons I learned from the Catholic Church, I could not. My whole philosophy of life hung in the balance before I realized that here was my test and I must say "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

I was born a Protestant and knew and cared nothing about the Catholic Church. I had a cousin, a very beautiful and talented girl, who gladly surrendered everything this world had to offer her in order to give herself wholly to the service of God in a religious order. I did not understand her attitude, but was sufficiently impressed and persuaded by her to enter a Catholic high school.

For three years in high school, I remained immune to the Catholic influence. Regulations required that every student attend Mass on First Friday. I always managed to duck that period. Finally, one Friday, I did go. I was amazed by the reverent silence that enveloped even the noisiest of my classmates until, for the first time, I saw Christ on the Cross as He was crucified. I had never felt so close to heaven, although I had visited many churches. How grossly inadequate are words to describe the feeling that welled in my heart! This was the sweetest hour in my life. It was then that I decided to become a Catholic. I began to take instructions the next day. When my training was completed, I was baptized and received my First Communion. I had never felt so light-hearted.

The most important single thing which I learned was Christ's command "Love ye one another as I have loved you." This, I determined was to be the basis of my philosophy of life. Because I have carried in my

"Al," as he is known by all his friends, wrote this article just before he left to join the Navy, as a "Sea Bee." With us as a councillor for several years, he won the admiration and affection of all who met him, by his unswerving loyalty to Friendship House, his constant desire to be of service, his gayety and charm. But above all, for his expressions of Faith . . . for Al is an active member of the Mystical Body and preaches "in season and out" the doctrine that all men are brothers. He lives it too, needless to add, and his power, simplicity and goodness are already helping to make interracialism become a reality in the Navy.



mind and heart the picture of Christ crucified, I have been able to achieve, at times through will power only, that love, even for white youths who destroy a poor Negro boy's clothes. But, the action of these boys did upset me and each succeeding incident of humiliation and discrimination served to add to my already confused state. Confused, because I could not understand why the beautiful doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ

and the eloquent sounding words of the Constitution on which our government was founded did not apply to a man because his skin was a few shades darker.

Every rebuff I suffered made me more determined to fight on. I tried to work my way through college, but could go through only three years. When I had to drop college, I thought that the best thing to do was to leave New Orleans, but I had to get another job to pay my carfare. While searching for a job early one morning, I walked into a large building and came to a winding stairway. I walked up three flights and then lost courage. Suddenly, a voice droned into my ears, "Young man, it takes three things to take you through life—faith in God, common sense, and plenty of nerve." At this, I walked up the last flight and into a large office. I found a man sitting there as though he were waiting for me. I hesitatingly asked him for work, and behold, he did need someone! I worked until I had enough money to come North.

I ARRIVED in New York and found people still throwing things, literally and figuratively, at the Negro. I was finding it increasingly difficult to love my white brother. I asked myself, "How can I be true to God and myself when I want to hate my white brother? There is something wrong."

At this crisis a friend told me of Friendship House. I went to Friendship House and met the Baroness de Hueck. With the Baroness I had one of the most delightful and enlightening talks I ever had. This talk was like the removal of a veil. My friends, it was from the Baroness that I learned that the reason for a thing is always in the *why*. When these youths who threw things at me were born, they had nothing against me. But they were conditioned by their parents and their parents' parents who were steeped in prejudice. This prejudice grew with the years.

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HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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FRIENDSHIP HOUSE CLARIFIES

LAST February 14th, Friendship House celebrated its fifth anniversary. Five years ago in Harlem, on St. Valentine's day, it started in one little bare room. Today it has grown quite a bit in New York City, and has its first branch in Chicago. It occurred to us, that it would not be a bad idea to re-state our goals, aims and works, and remind our many friends of the services and help we are prepared to render.

Friendship House's goal is very simple and Catholic. It desires to see Interracial Justice included in Christian Social Justice, which alone can reconstruct the world, and bring it the fruit of Justice — Peace. God's lasting, holy peace. Realizing that without Interracial Justice, America will never find its soul—nor will its democracy be complete and wholesome, Friendship House works ceaselessly toward that end.

Realizing that the Negro first and foremost wants Justice and not Charity, Friendship House does not work "FOR" the Negro, but "WITH" him, endeavoring at all times to make both Negroes and Whites see the Face of Christ in each other. For the solution of this strange and vexing problem, depends predominantly, if not completely, on the application of the Moral Laws of God. Mindful also, of St. Thomas of Aquinas' dictum: "That a modicum of necessities is necessary to practice virtue on," Friendship House attending to the duty of the moment, while laboring for the ultimate solution, constantly practices the seven corporal works of mercy, never forgetting that they are but a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. Remembering also, that the best form of help is self-help, Friendship House adds the practice of the seven spiritual works of mercy, the main one of which is the diffusion of knowledge. Briefly, there are the following departments in Friendship House.

Educational

This department covers many aspects of the word. Under it, there is a rather large program of direct education, such as, Cooperative Banking (Credit Unions). Consumers Cooperative, Plain Consumer Education so much needed in these days of rationing. Civil Defense, which includes First Aid, Home Nursing, Cooking, Nutrition, Child's care, etc., Labor School, according to the Popes' Encyclicals, Open Forums, and various lectures that partake both of spiritual and general educational aspects.

This Educational Program includes all ages and groups gathered at Friendship House. A five-thousand book Catholic Lending Library, with a complete Catholic Magazine service, and a wide distribution of free Catholic Literature, complete the works of the Educational Department.

Recreational

This part of the work applies to the Mothers' Club, and the General Recreational work done with all the adult groups that come to Friendship House, bringing together the white and colored people in a closely knit friendly group.

Social Service

This department is one of the main points of contact with the Community. It consists primarily in a direct Social Service agency, that could best be defined as a Referral Agency. Of a Clothing Room that serves the people in their greatest immediate need for clothing. In a small, but helpful and judicious assistance thru food orders for the family, or meals for the single person. This department is the centre of radiation to all the other works of Friendship House. For it is from its contacts that friends are made. Converts gotten. Members for the educational groups enrolled. Children brought to the Clubs.

Youth Work

Friendship House Youth Clubs have the children from grade school age to the end of High School. And now it is being planned to open a kindergarten for the smaller ages, a move much needed in Harlem at War. In this work, every department cooperates. A wide educational, social service, spiritual and recreational program is in use. About 150 children benefit by it. Scholarships to Catholic White Colleges are granted under its aegis. To date, eight young people, respectively, received degrees of A.B. and M.A. due to its help. The direct aim of the Youth Work is to create Catholic leaders for the immense Catholic Action that must be done for the Race, and America at large.

Services

Friendship House cordially invites its friends and anyone interested, to make use of its facilities and services. If you desire to have a first-hand knowledge of our works, and live with the Negro, you might apply during summer vacation or holiday ones for the position of a visiting volunteer. The cost of the stay is only your room rent and meals. (Average 20-25 per month).

Lectures

The Baroness de Hueck, Miss Ann Harrigan and Miss Nancy Grenell, are open to engagements. Both for single lectures and for special series. The latter are the specialty of the first two persons named. They offer short courses for teachers. College and High School. Lay and Religious. Outlines on courses for high school and college students in Interracial Justice, Negro History and Race Relations are available. Bibliographies for students and teachers in the same subjects and any others required will be gladly compiled.

Friendship House publishes a small but frank monthly paper that endeavors to bring the most striking aspects of the whole Apostolate before the Catholics of America. Subscription price, 50 cents.

Several pamphlets on the work, as well as the whole "Negro Question" are available: Story of Friendship House, 25 cents. Friendship House Speaks, 10 cents. A Novice in Harlem, 5 cents. Sample numbers of Friendship House News on request.

The same program and services are offered in both New York and Chicago.

THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

THERE is, of course, the matter of our boys in the service. We are going to have a Roll of Honor installed in the Generals' Club Room very soon now, with a little appropriate ceremony performed by a priest. We are very proud of our CYO boys and Volunteers, both white and colored, as always in Friendship House . . . where all things are Interracial, as they should be in a Democracy, and in the Church.

It will be nice to see their names before our eyes daily, and pray even oftener for them than we do now. But an idea struck us this week. Perhaps some of our readers would like to "adopt" one of our boys each. And not only write to them weekly but send them . . . first . . . rosaries, prayer-books, Catholic magazines, then goodies and cigarettes, and remember them at all the big holidays, as well as pray for them. In case this idea appeals to you, friends, we will immediately send you the name and address of one of these boys. There are about thirty of them in every section of the country, and overseas. Their letters show how much they miss Friendship House. Your friendliness will be more than appreciated.

The Infant of Prague has arrived, and the children are all happy. So are we. He stands there gentle and small, smiling down at all the playing children. Thank you, friends. Your intentions are remembered before Him. Of course, that should end the paragraph. But have you ever known a time when I did not add another request—to my deep gratitude? How could I do otherwise, for Friendship House is that kind of a place. Almost daily when I make the rounds, it whispers to me . . . "We need this. You won't forget to beg for that. And how about this other

urgent need." Sometimes I confess to being almost irritated. For I have never seen a place before, that constantly needed so many things. But then St. Francis-on-the-shelf, looks reproachfully at me, shaking his head . . . and saying that he is disappointed in me, seeing that I too belong to his order of beggars for the poor. And what are you going to do . . . between the House and St. Francis? Why you would do as I do . . . BEG. This time it is a Statue of the Blessed Mother we need. For in all our four places — there is nary a Statue of her. And she our best friend. We would like her about 2 feet high—simple and plain, as she must have been in Nazareth. We could buy one. We had our eyes on one . . . twenty-five dollars they want for her . . . Perhaps someone would like to give us that sum. For it stands to reason that we just can't go on without her much longer.

OUR deepest gratitude goes out to all those who responded so generously to our appeal for a Kindergarten. In a little while it will become a reality, thanks to you, our wonderful, generous friends. Ann Harrigan of the Chicago House, managed to look both elated and wistful. She looked elated because she was glad for us in New York to have that Kindergarten, and wistful, because in her little Casita de Porres, she has 220 kids and needs . . . games, children's books (Catholic), records for the Bishop's Juke Box, scissors, colored paper, crayons, threads, needles and material (by the yard) for her sewing class . . . Friends of Chicago . . . the address is 309 East 43rd. Perhaps you would like to erase that wistful look on Ann's face? If so, send her the needed things to that address.

STAFF REPORTER

by N.J.G.

WE'LL remember February for . . . the evening Ellen Tarry walked in, looking as beautiful as ever . . . everyone so glad to have her back in New York . . . adding to the zest of Monday Night discussion periods. The day the Statue of the Infant of Prague arrived, smiling so sweetly, looking so lovely in His golden crown and scarlet robe. The lecture by Fr. Owen, S.J., on St. Ignatius Loyola, which was packed full of meditation material on loyalty to the Church, the Sacraments of Duty and Obedience, courage and fortitude. We'll remember the night, too, when the Blessed Martin Choir filled our little library with heavenly music . . . and we'll never forget the heavy snowstorm which preceded an avalanche of snowball fights by the kids . . . each of us praying to Blessed Martin to spare our big front windows. (He did!)

Do you feel a desire to do "something different" now that the month of wind is here . . . and daffodils are being sold on the street corners? Why not use some of that surplus energy at Friendship House . . . believe me, the kids are equal to you! And, besides, it's fun. Your generosity will be rewarded — by God — a thousand-fold. And we do need volunteers so very badly.

In cooperation with the CDVO we've begun Consumer Education courses on Wednesday nights — every week at 8 P. M. Open to everyone, free of charge, they give the lowdown on point rationing, budgeting, substitute foods, nutrition and hundreds of secrets on home-making that will save money and time and energy. All are welcome.

Walter, our only male Staff Worker —and a prize, if there ever was one —is proud of our three months' old Thrift Club. 90 members and 300 dollars in the bank. The value of saving a little each week cannot be over-emphasized.

Do any of you have classical records you are not using? Had a sad little letter this morning from one of our boys in the Army in Texas. He writes: "I am slowly going mad listening to cowboy and hillbilly songs day in and day out and I long to hear good music again." If you too love the classics you know what this boy is going through . . . If you can, please send them to us, and we'll mail them right away. He'll be so very grateful.

NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise,
High as the list'ning skies;
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that
The dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that
The present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun,
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou Who hast brought us thus
Far on the way;
Thou Who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray away from the places,
Our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the
Wine of the world, we forget Thee,
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
Truer to our God,
True to our native land.

—James Weldon Johnson

CHICAGO HOUSE

by Ann Harrigan

WHEN the Baroness blew into Chicago, she seems to have brought with her a train of good things. Tom Keating and his new wife, Mary, got here—and we were all delighted for it was like a bit of old Harlem transplanted. Everybody wanted to see Mary because she is the author of "Novice in Harlem," and Tom says he's going to establish male supremacy by writing "Ex-Novice in Harlem." Then Maisie and Frank Sheed came down one evening. The crowd here listened delightedly to Mr. Sheed's brilliant thesis—*Man the Forgotten*. A few nights later, Helen Iswolsky spoke on *Soviet Russia Today*. Marge, Mary Alice, Dave, Willie, Louise, et al., are all extremely interested in communist technique. They have an idea that Catholics should not avoid communists; rather, they want communists to get to know Catholics as they really are . . . But that is a state that can be reached by three steps—(1) to know communism thoroughly; (2) to know Catholicism thoroughly; (3) to live Catholicism, i.e., to be willing to die, rather than compromise.

Casita de Porres, the Children's Center, is blooming under Mrs. Wiley's expert direction. Something is always happening. One afternoon Mildred had to leave the Casita for a moment. On her return, she found two kids waltzing with the Statue of Blessed Martin in the window! Another night, a raggedy boy with a face all covered by a rash came in. What was the matter? This was a rash from diabetes. He ate a dollar's worth of candy a day! Where did you get the dollar, son? I work on a milk wagon from 8-12. But when do you go to school? From 12-4. Where's your mother? In the hospital, having a little baby girl. Father? Don't know. How many days a week do you work? Every day . . . We got in touch with his principal and are trying to follow up the case, but this shows you how much is the need for a recreation center like ours in this neighborhood.

OUR first monthly Communion Breakfast on February 21 brought back memories of Harlem—Belle, Walter, Marian, Eddie, Loretta, Charlie, Mary, Jane, the two Johns, Jim, and all the rest. Remember? And here I am now, with a new big family of the swellest Volunteers you ever saw. Eighteen young men and

women, colored and white, from shops, schools, factories, listened hungrily to the words of the Baroness on personal sanctification as the means of girding oneself for the ever widening struggle for the souls of men, in which Lay Apostles will have their part too.

We were very much saddened by Bernard's going to the army. Our young genius outscored everybody else by about 300 points in his army tests, and is now in Officers' training. His brother, Dave, goes to Tuskegee next week for the Air Corps . . . two better fellows I have never met. They both want to be Staff Members after this is all over, and here's hoping . . .

Right now as I write, it is Monday afternoon, and there is the usual bustle prior to the Big Lecture. Tom Keating is measuring for much needed pamphlet racks and closets. Louise, our new all-day Volunteer, is working on the Library (and a headache it is!); Father Cantwell just dropped in to leave the mimeographed copies of "This is Justice," a sort of Easy Essay version of Pope Pius' "Forty Years After," the Encyclical on Reconstructing the Social Order. This is for tonight—We have a special treat—A Choral reading group from Mundelein College is going to read it, and then there will be a round table discussion on the salient points. Novel, eh? Education in pill form, we call it.

FIRST SUIT OF CLOTHES

(Continued from Page 1)

WHEN Christ made the world, did He intend that people should live in segregated communities? Did He mean that a man should shun his fellow-man because his skin was a different color? Christ drew a picture. If He had used all black or all white, he would not have had a pleasing scene. He used various colors to make his picture complete; the colors were meant to complement one another. Therefore, no race can despise another without condemning itself.

White parents must soon awake to the fact that they must teach their

children the true facts about the human race. A lie will last only until the truth is revealed. The schools must be made to teach all the children the part which the Negro has played in American history. Catholic children, above all, should be told the story of the lives of Blessed Martin de Porres, St. Benedict the Moor, and the other Negro saints.

White youths shall have to realize that they AND the Negro form the Mystical Body of Christ. They must see Christ in me as I, in them. Anyone who would hurt me, even to destroy clothes which I found so hard to obtain, was, in fact, hurting Christ. White youths who can not find it in their hearts to love me are sacrificing their souls.

IN a short time I shall become part of the armed forces of the United States, willing to give my life to preserve for Americans of all races, creeds, and beliefs the freedom and justice which some of them deny to me. I go happily for I sincerely believe that I have learned so much at Friendship House and have come to appreciate so fully the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ that despite the difficulties which may arise—and I anticipate many—I shall be able to do much good. As a great Negro once said "A piano has black and white keys; on the white keys, you can play a tune of sorts; the same applies to the black keys. But, for complete harmony, you must use both black and white keys." The same truth applies to the human race. Each group can attain its fullest development only through cooperation with the other groups. We must join hands as spiritual brothers under the Fatherhood of God. The white man, and more particularly the white Catholic, who refuses to do this is denying his heritage and is denying the lesson of the Cross. Christ guided me in that terrible hour back in New Orleans when the white man first struck his cruel blow. He has given me the grace through the years of struggle in New York. His love will be with me in this new adventure.

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